

**REMARKS**

The office action of August 9, 2004, has been carefully considered.

It is noted that claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over German reference DE 19535413(DE '413).

In view of the Examiner's rejections of the claims, applicant has amended claim 1.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims presently on file differ essentially and in an unobvious, highly advantageous manner from the constructions disclosed in the reference.

Turning now to the reference, it can be seen that de '413 discloses a pipe-like connecting piece. Although applicant admits that this reference does disclose some of the features recited in the claims presently on file, it does not disclose any of the features recited in the last three paragraphs of claim 1. To begin with the feature that "the material of the second component is embedded completely or mostly in the material of the third component" is not disclosed by DE '314 since the second component

2 of the reference (see Fig. 1) lies on the third component 3.

The second component 2 forms a bonding agent between the first component 1 and the third component 3 and for this reason alone cannot be embedded in the third material.

The feature that "a volume ratio of volumes of the second and third components relative to one another is selected such that combined properties of the second and third components with regard to fuel permeability, strength, and volume changes by swelling are approximated to properties of the second component with regard to fuel permeability, strength, and volume changes by swelling" is not disclosed by DE '413 since the second component 2 of the reference is a bonding agent that in practice is a very thin layer (i.e. much thinner than shown in the drawing of DE '413), so that the combined properties of the components 2 and 3 are determined essentially from the component 3, not from the component 2. Even if the reference does in some way address combined properties of the components 2 and 3, then, due to the difference in volume of the two components the resulting combined properties would be exactly the opposite of the present invention.

Finally, the feature that "the materials of the first and

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third components are directly connected together by a heat-fusion connection" is not disclosed by DE '413 since the reference requires a second component 2 to connect the first 1 and the third 3 components. If the first and third components were fused together as in the presently claimed invention, then the second component 2 of DE '413 would not be necessary. DE '413 requires the second component and thus does not disclose the first component directly connected to the third component by heat-fusion as in the presently claimed invention.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over the above-discussed reference is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

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Any additional fees or charges required at this time in connection with this application may be charged to Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 11-1835.

Respectfully submitted,

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**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING**

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, PO Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on November 9, 2004.

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